

# Prabuddha Bharata

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वसिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निर्वाणत।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

### XI.

[ Place :—The Alambazar Math.

Year : 1897.

Subjects: Initiation by Swamiji into Sannyasa of some members of the Math.—His teachings about Sannyasa.—Renunciation is the goal of human life.—Sannyasa is the giving up of everything else for the sake of the highest self-emancipation and the good of the whole world.—There is no fixed time for taking Sannyasa during one's life,—“Directly you have the renouncing spirit in you, take up Sannyasa that very moment.”—Sannyasa is of four kinds.]

We have already stated it before, that after Swamiji's first return to Calcutta from the West, many a youth full of enthusiasm used to visit him. During the time, it was noticed, Swamiji used to teach these youngmen very often about the ideals of Brahmacharya and renunciation and to infuse into their minds in various ways the enthusiasm for taking up Sannyasa or, in other words, for giving up everything else for the sake of self-liberation and the good of the world. Often we had heard him say that real knowledge of the Self is not possible without having taken up Sannyasa; and not only that, but even success in and the pursuit of noble undertakings calculated to bring about the good and happiness of great multitudes, are impossible without

Sannyasa. He always used thus to place before zealous youngmen the lofty ideals of renunciation, and anyone expressing his desire of accepting Sannyasa would receive from him greater encouragement and grace. So inspired by his enthusiasm some youngmen of great good fortune gave up their worldly life in those days and became initiated by him into Sannyasa. The disciple was present at the Alambazar Math the very day the first four of this batch were given Sannyasa by Swamiji, and that day is still living vividly in his memory.

Those who are well-known in the Order of Sri Ramakrishna as Swamis Nityananda, Virajananda, Prakashananda, and Nirbhayananda were initiated into Sannyasa that day.



Often has the disciple heard it from the Sannyasis of the Math that Swamiji was repeatedly requested by his brother-monks not to admit one particular candidate out of these four into Sannyasa, whereupon Swamiji replied, "Ah, if even *we* shrink from working out the salvation of the sinful, the heavy-laden, the humiliated, and the afflicted in soul, who else are to take care of them in this world?—no, don't you please stand against me in this matter." So Swamiji's strong opinion triumphed, and always the refuge of the helpless, he resolved out of his great love to give him Sannyasa.

The disciple had been staying at the Math for the last two days, when Swamiji called him and said, "Well, you forsooth belong to the priestly class; to-morrow you get them perform their Shradh, and the next day I shall give them Sannyasa. So get yourself ready over the books of ceremonials to-day." The disciple bowed to this mandate of Swamiji.

One day before the ceremony of Sannyasa, the four Brahmacharis intent on entering the Holy Order, had their heads tonsured, and dressed in white linen after ablutions in the Ganges bowed at Swamiji's feet. Then with Swamiji's blessings on them, they commenced with great zeal the performance of their own Shradh ceremony.

It may not be too much here to point out that those who accept the Sannyasa according to the Shastras, have at the same time to perform their own Shradh, or obsequies, before that ceremony, because after their Sannyasa they can have no concern whatsoever in the fruits of any Vedic or sub-Vedic ritual. No effects of any Shradh or any customary offering made through any descendant of their line can then even touch them. So before taking Sannyasa one has to perform one's own Shradh, and dying to the world, one has to make the Shradh offerings at one's own feet, annihilating for ever all one's ties to the world, and even those relationships of which

the body is emblematic. This is called the Adhivasa ceremony of Sannyasa. It was taken note of by the disciple that Swamiji had the fullest faith in all these Vedic ceremonies and that he used to express his displeasure if ever they were not performed punctiliously according to the Shastras. Many are now-a-days seen to don a Gerua (the ochre robe) and then stalk abroad, thinking that is quite enough for their Sannyasa. But Swamiji never had any such view of the matter. He regarded Sannyasa as the sacred formal vow of practising the Brahmadhyā (the science of the highest Illumination), as it has long been practised by the recognised line of adepts from time immemorial, and therefore he used to get all his Brahmacharis go through all the ordained preliminary ceremonials as faithfully as possible. And we have it from reliable sources that after Paramahansa Deva withdrew himself from manifestation, Swamiji collected those scriptures and Upanishads in which the rules and ceremonies about Sannyasa are given, and with the help of these and in company of all his brother-disciples had their vow of Sannyasa even re-affirmed according to Vedic rites before a properly installed likeness of the Master.

There was a room for drinking water on the first storey of the Alambazar Math, and in this room all the many adjuncts and accessories for the Shradh ceremony were collected. Many a time had he who was to be the Swami Nityananda performed the Shradh of his forefathers, so there could be no flaw in all these collections. After taking his bath and permission of Swamiji, the disciple set about his sacred duty of the priest, and the regular reading out of the Mantras and scriptures went on. Swamiji peeped in now and then to see what was going on. But when at the close of the ceremonies the four Brahmacharis made the last Shradh offerings at their own feet, standing before the world as men completely dead to it for ever,



the heart of the disciple seemed then sinking within him and he became very much depressed at the thought of the austere sternness of Sannyasa. When the four votaries withdrew to the Ganges with the offerings to be thrown away, Swamiji detecting the mental agitation asked him, "Well, I see, you feel some dread in your mind at all this experience, is it not?" and when the disciple with his bowed head confessed it to be so, Swamiji said, "From this day these four are dead to the world, and new bodies, new thoughts, new dress will be theirs from to-morrow,—and shining in the glory of the Brahman they will rest like flaming fire! 'Not by wealth, nor by ritual, but by renunciation alone they attained Immortality.'"

At these words of Swamiji, the disciple stood mute; his mind felt astounded at the thought of the monk's austerity and all his vaunting knowledge of the Shastras seemed blown out! The reflection came upon him: 'Oh, what a world of difference between mere words and actual deeds!'

Casting the Shraddh offerings into the Ganges, the four Brahmacharis with their own obsequies performed returned and bowed to the feet of Swamiji. He blessed them and said, "You have the enthusiasm to embrace the loftiest vow of human life; blessed indeed is your birth, blessed your family, blessed the mothers who held you in their womb! कुलं पवित्रं जननी कृतार्था—'The whole family-line becomes hallowed, the mother achieves her highest!'

That day after supper at night Swamiji talked of the ideal of Sannyasa alone. Directing his voice towards the zealous candidates for Sannyasa, he said, "The real aim of Sannyasa is आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च—'For the highest freedom of the self and the good of the world.' Without having Sannyasa none can really be the knower of the Brahman—this is what the Vedas and the Vedanta proclaim. Don't listen to the words of those

who say, 'Both live the worldly life and be a knower of the Brahman.' That is the flattering self-consolation of crypto-hedonists. He who has the slightest desire for worldly pleasures, even a shred of some such craving, will feel frightened at the thought of the path you are going to tread; so to give himself some consolation he goes about preaching that impossible creed of harmonising Bhoga and Tyaga. That is all the raving of lunatics, the frothings of the demented,—idle theories contrary to the scriptures, contrary to the Vedas. No freedom without renunciation. Parabhakti (i. e. love of God in its highest stage) can never be achieved without renunciation. Renunciation is the word, नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय—'There's no other way than this.' Even the Gita says, काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं क्वयो विदुः—'The sages know Sannyasa to be the giving up of all work that has Desire for its end.'

"Nobody attains Freedom without shaking off the coils of worldly worries. The very fact that somebody lives the worldly life proves that he is tied down there as the bondsman of some craving or other. Why otherwise will he cling to that life at all? He is the slave either of woman or of gold, of position or of fame, of learning or of scholarship. It is only after freeing oneself from all this thralldom that one can get on along the way of Freedom. Let some argue as loud as they please, I see it quite plain that unless all these bonds are given up, unless Sannyasa is embraced, none is going to be saved, no attainment of Brahmajnana is possible."

Disciple.— Do you mean, Sir, that to take up Sannyasa is to be led to the Goal?

Swamiji.— Whether the goal is attained or not is not the point before us now. But until you don't get out of this wheel of Samsara, until the slavery of desire is not shaken off, so long you can't attain either Bhakti or Mukti. To the knower of the Brahman, perfections in power or prosperity are mere trivialities.



Disciple.— Sir, is there any special time or any variety ordained for Sannyasa?

Swamiji.— There is no special time prescribed for a life of Sannyasa. The Sruti says: *यदहरेव चिरजेत् तदहरेव प्रभजेत्*—‘Directly the spirit of renunciation comes, you should take up Sannyasa.’ The Yogavashishtha says: *युवैव धर्मशीलः स्यात् अनित्यं खलु जीवितं । को हि जानाति कस्याद्य मृत्युकाळो भविष्यति ॥* “Owing to life itself being frail and uncertain, you should be devoted to religion even in your youth. For who knows when one’s body may fall off?” The Shastras are found to speak of four kinds of Sannyasa: (1) Vidwat, (2) Vividishā, (3) Markata, (4) A’tura. The awakening of real renunciation all at once and the consequent giving up of the world through Sannyasa is something that never happens unless there are strong Samskaras or tendencies developed from previous birth. And this is called the Vidwat Sannyasa. Vividishā Sannyasa is the case of one who out of a strong yearning for the knowledge of the Self and with that purpose to devote himself to the pursuit of scriptural study and practice, goes to the man of Realisation and from him embraces Sannyasa to give himself up to those pursuits. Markata Sannyasa is the case of another man who is driven out of the world by some of its chastisements such as the death of a relative or the like, and then takes up Sannyasa, though in such case the renouncing spirit does not endure long. Thakur used to say of it: “With this kind of renunciation one hastens away to the up-

country and then happens to get hold of a nice job; and then eventually perhaps arranges to get his whilom wife brought over to him or perhaps takes to a new one!” And last, there is another kind of Sannyasa which the Shastras prescribe for a man who is going to die, the hope of whose life has been given up, or who is lying on his deathbed. For then if he dies, he dies with the holiest of vows upon him, and in his next birth the merit of it will accrue to his life. And in case he escapes death, he won’t go back to his old life again but live the rest of his days in the noble endeavour after Brahmajñana. The Swami Shivananda gave this kind of Sannyasa to your uncle. The poor man died but through that initiation he will come to a new birth of higher excellence. After all, there is no other way to the knowledge of the Self but through Sannyasa.

Disciple.— What then, Sir, will be the fate of the householder?

Swamiji.— Why, through the merit of good Karma, they shall have this renunciation in some future birth of theirs. And directly this renunciation comes, there is an end of all troubles,—with no further delay he crosses over this Mystery of life and death. But then all rules have their exceptions, one or two though they be. A few men, one or two, may be seen to attain the highest freedom even through the perfection in the practice of the householder’s Dharma, as we have amongst us Nag Mahashaya, for instance.

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**H**OW wonderful is the Vedic revelation of the Divine Motherhood! The whole of the Rigveda has nothing to compare with the sustained strain of the highest spirituality which this Sukta of revelation embodies, and yet our self-constituted Vedic scholars of

modern times have the pitiful brass to declare that the singers of Vedic hymns were mere poets, animists or hylozoists! And who was the Rishi of this revelation of Divine Motherhood? Ah, who but a woman with the glories of the mother-heart welling up innate



within her soul! Meet it is that in this season of the Mother's coming into the poor but warm homesteads of Her Hindu children, we should recall that mighty event of yore when wonderfully transfigured, this daughter of the Rishi Ambhrina stood as the divine vehicle through which, for the very first time in human history, the Mother of all spirituality revealed to man Her supreme glories and Her eternal blessings. The personality of the Rishi Vak, the daughter of Ambhrina (a word which in the Vedic lexicon stands as one of the synonyms of '*mahat*' or 'the great') has been sought to be explained away as an allegory by philological sophistry, but these are all mouthings of wisecracks who have no human keenness and concern for history and are only mad after the spruceness of theory!

The clearest, completest and the most well-sustained of all the revelations of the highest Vedic wisdom, this Sukta\* of the Rishi Vak stands as the fountainhead of all the inspired systems of Shakti-worship that have prevailed in later centuries within the fold of Hinduism. It is not only the highest authority for all such systems, but undoubtedly also, it forms the most authoritative framework for all their underlying philosophy, and as such it is the most potent factor for correcting all the un-Vedic aberrations of the Shakti-cult. And it is a fact of considerable significance that perhaps of all the Vedic revelations of Truth, this particular revelation has received the most striking re-affirmation for the welfare of modern men from the spiritual realisations of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The system of Shakti-worship in our country had already become too much overburdened with centuries of individual contributions and accretions both in concepts and rituals. It had become a veritable labyrinth of endless niceties of intellectual thought and practical observance, and on the plea of making themselves practical at every step, many a worship-

per of the Mother was being deluded into the labyrinth to find themselves lost at last in dubious bypaths of achievement. The greatest need of the whole system in modern times was therefore the reassertion of its real trend and basis, the real main-current of purpose to which all the many evolving and complicated tributaries of discipline and practice must anyhow join themselves. We shall see presently how both the Vedic Sukta of Rishi Vak and the modern Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna embodied for us this real trend and basis of the whole system of Shakti-worship.

At the very outset, to clinch all doubts of the old Vedic ritualists, the Mother declares Herself to be the One Worshipped of all worshippers,—the one cosmic Vitality, the one Divinity, of the manifold Vedic gods: **महद्देवानामसुरत्वमेकं**, as the Rigveda sings elsewhere. And the Revelation runs: "Om, I verily go forth as the Rudras, the Vasus, the A'dityas, aye, as all the gods of the pantheon; I am the support of both the Sun-god and the Sky-god, of the Fire-god as well as of Indra and the twin Ashwins. I am again the support of Soma, the destroyer of foes, I the support of Twastá, of Pushan, of Bhaga. I am the giver of wealth to the worshipper, who gives unto the gods, making plenty of sacrificial offerings and libations of *soma*. I am the Queen of the whole universe, the bringer of manifold wealth, the realiser of Truth, the first and foremost of all the deities of sacrifice. It is this My own self, the All-pervading, the All-permeating, which all the gods in all the various climes do but manifest." These first three Mantras make a revelation which gathers up into one Supreme Divinity all the scattered god-revelations of the Vedic age. There are Riks, of course, in this Veda which lifts the worshipper up to the wisdom of Divine Unity, even, sometimes, in its Impersonal aspect. But these three Riks are unique in this sense that in them all the deities

\*The full text of this Sukta is given at the end of these Notes.



do not become harmonised and unified in some Supreme Impersonal State, the परमं पदं, the एकं सत्, or the परमे व्योमन्, but in some Supreme Personality, the Mother of all. Any particular Vedic deity might have been realised as being separate from other deities when personal, and unified with all when Impersonal. But here we have the one and the same personal Deity standing for all the others as constituting their very unity and essence. Such was the grandeur, even in its inception, of the cult of the Mother!

Next, from the philosophy of worship, the Revelation descends to the plane of the individual man to point out to him how the Mother is his Oversoul and how from Her emanate all the enjoyment and achievement, all the inspiration and wisdom of human life. "It is through Me that each being enjoys and perceives, lives and hears what is uttered; those that regard Me not, fall into decline. Oh, cultured one, listen to me, for I speak to you of the Highest that faith has ever to rest itself on. And I Myself utter all this that is adored of all the gods as also of all men. And him, verily, I exalt to greatness, him I make a Brahman, or a Rishi, or a man of surpassing intelligence, whomsoever I so desire." The expression 'eating food' in the text may be rendered as meaning all sorts of enjoyments, for the term 'annam' has a very wide significance. The Mother provides all the manifold enjoyments for all sentient beings, and not only that, She constitutes the power and support of all those functions which go to form the vitality and the intelligence of beings. In fact, She stands for Nature, both internal and external,—the conception which Sankhya developed with much ingenuity. And it is inevitable that he who has no respect for this Power behind nature, he who does not see the Mother in it, must suffer in life. Mark, it is not merely the sort of respect which science pays to nature, it must be the respect for the Divine Mother. Even your expert dealings

with nature devoid of this respect will not save you from the crash of doom, for then all the material power that you earn will one day recoil upon your own head.

And then for all the real saving wisdom, man is being called upon by the Divine Mother to listen to her. "विद्यासि सा भगवती परमाद्दिदेवि," so says the Chandi; "and Thou art that highest Divine Science, Oh Goddess!" Aye, even the disciplines which the aspirants for Freedom undergo, the persevering practices and vows, the meditations and austerities, all form the very being of the Mother, so that he who communes with Her in devotion reaps the fruits of all these practices. And then again, She Herself is the bestower of all these fruits; and as the highest Illumination comes as knowledge, the Mother's call to Her children to listen to what She utters is very significant. "For I reveal what is devoutly sought for both by gods and by men." For all revelations of Truth, we have to turn to the Mother. Nowhere has this been better illustrated than in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Even sometimes he would be found to disdain the common frail instruments of knowledge. For do they really give us access to truth? No. 'Science deals with narrow human utilities, not with truth as it is. In science you think in a certain way, because that is to your earthly advantage. But nobody can aver that what science says of things is the real final truth about them. And yet, every revelation of truth, however narrow and relative, has the Mother alone for its source. For the very energy of a concentrated mind that discovers truths is an experience, which, knowingly or unknowingly, is something indeed of the nature of touching Her feet! Blessed is he who knows that in every act of mental concentration, we simply draw on the infinite ocean of Her Blissful Being!

And the last statement of this second section of the Sukta announces a momen-



tous truth which has variously been sought to be echoed in the Upanishads. यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः, "whomsoever He elects in love, to him alone is He revealed." एष ह्येवैनं साधु कर्म कारयति तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्य उन्निनीषत उ एवैनमसाधु कर्म कारयति तं यमघो निनीषते।

"He causes good deeds to be performed by one whom He wants to raise in the scale of religious merit, and bad deeds to be performed by another whom He wants to lower in the same scale." So here also the Mother gives out the same profound secret about spiritual merit and demerit—"Whomsoever I so desire, I make a Brahmā, or a Rishi or a man of superior intelligence."—Alas for the commonplace doctrine of free-will! Human will is after all a superficial thing, and far nearer and closer to myself than my will is the Being of the Mother. If I am deemed free so long as there is no extraneous restraint on the determinations of my will, well, the play of the Mother behind this will of mine involves no extraneous restraint at all. It is a case of *my* intrinsic Nature shaping forth the determinations of my will. So the sense and quality of freedom are not at all affected. Yet it is all a play of the Mother! And still within the blessed depths of communion, there is a point of rapt-up feeling where the play becomes mutual, where a reciprocal mood of love and bliss determines the outside events that are yet to be, determines whether one is to be a Rishi or a Brahmā or something else. Blessed is he who has attained to this mutuality of blissful mood!

But before this consummation, man with his puny human will is but a poor plaything, cut off, as it were, from his player-self. To the real player as one is in the Mother, merit or demerit, distinction, mediocrity or lowliness, are all mere guises under which the mutual play goes on, and every state is equally suffused by the overflowing gladness

of the play, the only thing that matters. But down below, on the plane of human will and effort, alas, the distinctions alone seem to matter, and statements such as those quoted from the Upanishads and the Sūktā sound queer and even cruel. यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः,—Oh, what a havoc made of human efforts and strivings! God-realisation is never to be an effect following some cause that lies within the range of human knowledge and effort! Ah, what consolation remains for the aspirant, if the Goal is thus raised above all human pursuit of ends and means? Ramanuja comes forward to solve the difficulty but fails. He says that God reveals Himself to whomsoever He so favours; but it is quite evident and natural that every person favours another who is sincerely devoted to him; therefore it follows that God reveals Himself to him alone who merits that favour by means of his sincere devotion. But in the foregoing lines the Upanishad exactly means to preclude the idea and possibility of winning God-realisation by any of the known human means variously prescribed for religious aspirants. So Ramanuja makes quite an unwarranted assumption.

The fact of the matter is that the real plane of God-realisation is far above the intellectual plane where human experience necessarily resolves itself into series of ends and means, causes and effects. The modes of Spiritual Communion in that plane require no why or wherefore to be asked of them. They come as the modulations of some soul-enrapturing music, the rise and fall of its notes. Causality is not the link in their sequence, but some unspeakable Bliss which floweth wheresoever It listeth! So even before you are admitted into the experience of God, the chain of causes and effects, of ends and means, which you have been dragging all along in the form of intellection, drops off, and the question does not obtrude itself as to what past efforts acted as cause to produce



this state of Divine Communion. The moving clouds do not produce the vision of the eternal blue above, they can but cover it for a while! But then, what determines the becoming in that higher spiritual plane? The texts seem clearly to declare that it is the desire or will of God or the Mother. And the important point to note is that there is a world of difference between human will and Divine Will. The former can but will an end or an effect necessarily related to some means or some cause. And the Divine Will is but the outflowing, as it were, of the Light and Bliss of His Being, a surging forth of the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda. So it is as well an impulse within the hidden depths of our own being, and as such it belongs to us far more intimately than what we call our desires or predilections can ever do. If this fact of the real identity of the Divine Will with our inmost being is once realised, then all the difficulty in grasping the real meaning of the texts in question, so paradoxical in appearance, disappears.

Returning now to the text of the Sukta, we find the concluding part involves an important reference to the immanence of the Mother both in human history and the history of creation. "I stretch forth the bow for Rudra for the destruction of the deadly foe who is spiteful against the Brahman. I make battle for men. I as the immanent power possess the earth and the heavens. And transcendent to them all, the Dyaus-Pitar I brought forth. My home lies beyond the creative waters (cosmic forces) of the Ocean of the manifesting Cause. And from there I pervade all the worlds, and with My body I touch the yonder shining heaven. Like the wind I blow about, as it were, when starting the whole process of creating the worlds. Thus I am in My glory, beyond all this earth and the heavens." The word 'Pitaram' in the text signifies the Heaven-god, the Dyau. In the Vedic age it specially belonged to him to be called the

Father, and it is he who was sought to be worshipped in ancient Greece as the Dyaus-pitar, and later on as Jupiter. According to our Pundits the first line of the text alludes to the Puranic story of the destruction of the Asura Tripura by Shiva. But it is better to take the passage to mean the eternal truth of the eventual overthrow of all selfish power in the world, and the use of the present tense supports this interpretation. We translate the word 'Yoni' as 'home,' and the Vedic lexicon is our authority. For to render it into 'cause' would be to corrupt the whole meaning by the fallacy of *regressus ad infinitum*.

The Mother stretches forth the bow or the weapon which is to destroy the Evil Power. And what is this evil power? We have two words in the text to describe it, be it embodied in an individual or in a nation, race or the like: it spites the great Truth, the absolute Oneness of Being, and secondly, it is prone to killing or, in a word, it is bellicose. It is evil to nurture any selfhood, whether in the individual or in the nation, race or the community, that tends to antagonise the great truth of the absolute Oneness of Being. The selfhood in all these cases must be nourished and used, not in any selfish interest, not to multiply division and discord, not to strengthen and perpetuate any separatist conception and feeling, but to realise more and more in life and thought the truth of the absolute Oneness of Being. Where this true purpose of the individual or the national selfhood is ignored and violated and the selfish person or nation waxes strong with the strength of material resources, the Rudra embodying Divine power in the form of material forces appears to destroy this evil. And the Mother supplies all the equipment for such destruction; and how? Ah, even in the form of those forces which the weapons of destruction release when taking life! And the ferocity of this killing may know no bounds! To make



Herself more explicit, the Mother then declares, "It is I who make battles for men." In every war, the great Cosmic Power, the Mother of the Universe comes forth, as it were, to reappropriate to Herself the forces which manipulated by men have turned into the weapons and means for killing one another. To the true worshipper of the Mother the whole of warfare is an unique embodiment of Her benign presence. The big battlefield is like a vast sacrificial pyre, the whole of it blazing high with the divine flame of the Mother's presence; and into this roaring fire, the animosities of men, like so many sacrificial spoons, are pouring forth the oblations, the countless bodies of men, and the material resources of various sorts piled up for years. "कालोऽहं लोकक्षयकृत्"—says the Lord in the Gita.

The whole of our sacred book, the Chandi, illustrates, with expositions of the wonderful wisdom, how the Mother again and again made battle for the destruction of the Evil Power. And after the last of these great battles, the Mother announced Her eternal promise in the following words: इत्थं यदा यदा वाधा दानवोत्था भविष्यति । तदा तदावतीर्याहं करिष्याम्यरिसंचयं ॥ "Whenever in this way distress will result to the righteous out of the power of Evil, I will descend to that plane and will effect the destruction of foes." And history studied with proper insight affords ample corroboration of the repeated fulfilment of this divinely revealed promise. The next truth contained in the Revelation is about the Transcendental aspect of the Mother. Here She completely identifies Herself with the Brahman. Here the halting dualism of the Sankhya philosophy is transcended and the crude conception of a Female Principle in creation as opposed to another Male Principle is completely left behind. Many are apt to think that as the Maya-shakti of the Brahman, the Mother is to be

worshipped as a principle distinct from the highest principle of the Absolute. The distinction between Shakti or power and the Shaktiman or the Thing having power is but an intellectual distinction, and does not hold good when we soar beyond the intellect. Therefore when the Mother is realised as being transcendental to all Her various manifestations, the realisation verily becomes the realisation of the Brahman. It is this supreme truth which underlies the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna that the Mother is both Saguna and Nirguna,—has both a manifesting aspect and an absolutely non-manifesting aspect.

And this is the real Advaitism of Tantrik worship. Whenever the Tantrik worshipper forgets the truth that the Female Principle in Nature has a transcendental non-manifesting aspect, which alone is the real goal of all the many Tantrik disciplines, he is bound to lose his way in the mazes of Bhoga, created or manifested felicity, and is eventually caught up again in the wheel of Samsara. Every false conception of the Mother which does not centre itself in Her absolute and transcendental aspect, at least as the devotee advances in his path of progress, is very likely to lead to entanglements of Avidya. And so the revelation concludes with the solemn declaration of the real truth about the Mother. She brought forth even the very first God of human religion, the Father of the other gods, and She exists beyond the infinite Causal Ocean, the movements of whose waters create and keep up the whole cosmos. But She is not merely the transcendental One, She is also the immanent Divinity and Power in the whole creation. She is beyond the All, and yet She becomes the All. But the very last words of the revelation again impress upon us the central truth that to know the Mother in Her real glory, we must go beyond the earth and the heavens, that is beyond all creation. She



is the One-without-the-Second, the Brahman of the Srutis.

This Advaita aspect of the Mother's being formed an important revelation in the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and that is why the teaching that Brahman and Shakti are one and the same comes from him with momentous force. And this teaching is of tremendous importance for all ages. For the recognition of Shakti as mere Shakti or the Manifesting Power may lead to great powers of Bhoga or enjoyment without any corresponding development of real spirituality, while the recognition of Brahman as the mere absolute, a doctrine having

nothing to do with the creed of Shakti, tends to make spirituality less and less dynamic. And this estrangement between the conceptions of Brahman and Shakti has really been the bane in the past life of the Hindu race. It is owing to this alienation that for many an epoch in our history we are having in our country spiritual giants, on the one hand, who do not tackle face to face the many problems of the people, and men of great social gifts and powers, on the other hand, who fail even to catch the very key-note of our national ideals. And the result has been a sad disintegration of the very power and vitality of the race. We hope to deal with this aspect of the question in a future issue.

( The Devi-Suktam, Rig-veda, Mandal 10, Sukta 125. )

ॐ अहं रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिश्चराम्य-  
हमादित्यैरुत विश्वदेवैः ।  
अहं मित्रावरुणोभा बिभर्म्य-  
हमिन्द्राग्नी अहमश्विनोभा ॥ १ ॥

अहं सोममाहनसं बिभर्म्य-  
हं त्वष्टारमुत पूषणं भगम् ।  
अहं दधामि द्रविणं हविष्मते  
सुग्राव्ये यजमानाय सुन्वते ॥ २ ॥

अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां  
चिकितुवी प्रथमा यज्ञियानाम् ।  
तां मां देवा व्यदधुः पुरुत्रा  
भूरिस्वात्रां भूर्याविशयन्तीम् ॥ ३ ॥

मया सोऽन्नमस्ति यो विपश्यति  
यः प्राणिति यः ईं शृणोत्युक्तम् ।  
अमन्तवो मां त उपक्षियन्ति  
श्रुषि श्रुत श्रद्धिवं ते वदामि ॥ ४ ॥

अहमेव स्वयमिदं वदामि  
जुष्टं देवेभिरुत मानुषेभिः ।  
यं यं कामये तं तमुग्रं रुणोमि  
तं ब्रह्माणं तमृषिं तं सुमेधाम् ॥ ५ ॥

अहं रुद्राय धनुरातनोमि  
ब्रह्मद्विषे शरवे हन्तवा उ ।  
अहं जनाय समदं रुणोम्य-  
हं द्यावापृथिवी आविवेश ह ॥ ६ ॥

अहं सुवे पितरमस्य मूर्धन्  
मम योनिरप्स्वन्तः समुद्रे ।  
ततो वितिष्ठे भुवनानु विश्वो-  
तामून्धां वर्ष्मणोपस्पृशामि ॥ ७ ॥

अहमेव वात इव प्रवास्या-  
रभमाणा भुवनानि विश्वा ।  
परो दिवा पर एना पृथिव्यै-  
तावती महिना सस्वभूव ॥ ८ ॥



## THE REAL DEMOCRACY.

THE governance of the people *by* and *for* the people themselves is the real essential idea which the term 'democracy' implies. And to govern is to administer the affairs of life in such a way that the common good and the common progress of a country are achieved and maintained.

Democracy, therefore, is that system of administering the affairs of a country in which the people themselves form the most active and determining factor in working out the common good and the common progress of the country. Now it goes without saying that the initiative and power of working out this common good and common progress constitute the real point at issue between democracy and all other forms of government. When the people themselves actually possess and exercise this power, it is democracy, otherwise not.

History in the West clearly shows us that its fundamental keynote has been the long-sustained struggle in many a country for wresting this power of working out the common good from self-assuming autocracies and oligarchies and transferring it permanently to the people themselves. The people, of course, were made to fight in this momentous struggle; but when the struggle was won, when the power of working out the common good was seized from the hands of selfish, grasping minorities, the people themselves did not come to possess and exercise all this power directly, but they contented themselves with delegating it to a state which, of course, was to be managed by representatives of their own choice. Thus arose in the West the famous system of State-centred politics.

Now, it may be argued by the advocates of this system that it is not possible for all the men in a country to come and put their heads together for conducting the constant business

of a government, and so representation is the only feasible form under which a popular government can ever be conducted in any country. But it is in the very conception of a government that the fallacy of this argument lies. Why do you assume that in order to conduct the business of a government the people must have to come and sit together in a place? Some such deliberative centre, of course, may well form an organic part of the government of a country, but why should the people be made to delegate to it all their power of working out their own common good? Why should a state appropriate to itself all this power and initiative and then dictate to the people at every step what they have to do with regard to every affair of their life? It is no compensation for the forced deprivation of initiative in the people to claim that the state is a highly representative institution; for the representative does not represent what the people themselves decide to be for their good or to be their duty, but what he himself thinks to be their duty or their good. And it does not matter even though the representatives take care to explain their ways of thinking to their constituents and obtain their endorsement of those views. For that is simply a trick of thrusting their own minds on the blind impulses of their constituents. But the real *demos* of a real democracy must be free to use their own minds in deciding what is their duty and their good. This active use of their own minds for the sake of working out the common good presupposes centuries of training in the people of a country. They must be brought up for long under a common scheme of life which should drive home into their consciousness a common outlook on human thoughts and actions and a common view of their values. When once such a common scheme of



life enters into the very mental make-up of the people, we shall find, each individual unit becomes capable of deciding for himself, with the least help from outside, what exactly, in any particular case, is due from him or good for him, from the place that he happens to occupy in this scheme of life. The function of his leaders in the country, now, is not to create but to illumine his perceptions and to steady his foothold on the path he treads.

But in countries where the state-centred system of politics obtains, we find a very different conception, and quite an artificial one, of the responsibility that rests with each individual unit of the people. Here each man has to learn first with much diligence what sort of a thing the machine of the state planted in his country really is ; and then he has to learn in the terms of his rights what exactly he may expect the state to do for him in return for the taxes it gathers from him ; finally he expects to be called upon at times to form his opinion on some political question with the very cheaply proffered help of neighbourly leaders and penny newspapers and, frequently then, to vote for the election of some spokesman to sit in the parliament. All this, of course, enables him also to form in his mind something like a scheme of life, more or less definite. But what is his place in this scheme of life ? That is the essential question. He is indispensable for this scheme no doubt, but more as a passive instrument of the state than as an active factor in the administration of affairs for which the state claims to live. Like a big labour-saving machine, the state exempts the people from the central responsibility of individually exercising initiative and power for the common good, but it does so at the inevitable cost of the developement of a strong and deeply rooted individuality in the people. Virtually they remain always like jetsam and flotsam in all the political changes which the state imposes on the country through a minority representing the people

only in name while actually representing the needs and policies of the state-machine to the people, their constituents. All this is not real democracy, but democracy on trust. For in such a system, the people have to make over all the real democratic power and initiative to the central state as a trust and thus reduce their own life to a state of absolute dependence on the state-machine. Their status of the perpetual ward in this respect engenders in them an unsuspected helplessness which becomes all too evident if once the machine of the state turn turtle. Thus the best energies of the country have always to be exploited and directed to the maintaining of the state in all its power and puissance, and the Machine continues more and more to live and feed upon the Man in the demos or the country. This is the nemesis of having the politics of a country too much mechanised.

The politics of a country concerns itself fundamentally with the material efficiency of the people. This is the very pivotal concern of politics. Now the material efficiency of a whole people is a result towards which each individual has to contribute his own labour and intelligence. Therefore the most fundamental question for politics is : How to make sure of this individual contribution ? Broadly speaking, there are two methods for the peoples to assure themselves of this individual contribution : one may be called the mechanical method, and the other, the moral method. The mechanical method proceeds by setting up a central authority in the country which is to have all things done by the people essentially by legislation. This mechanical method, therefore, has to be fundamentally coercive in character, and the modern form of representative government is a principle which has been found in history only to mitigate but never totally to abrogate this coercive character. The moral method, on the other hand, seeks to have all things done by the people more through the authority of



their individual moral sense than through any form of external coercion. The benefit of centuries of popular training, therefore, is indispensable to this method. But when once this individual moral sense, or his sense of Dharma or duty, has been strengthened and matured to a degree, it is found quite possible to leave to this individual Dharma the important responsibility of bringing to the whole collective life and its efficiency the individual's contribution of labour and intelligence. The central government which politics pursuing this moral method requires, need not, therefore, be fundamentally coercive in character. Its purpose will be amply served if it succeeds in working for the protection and homogeneity of the whole political system. These two ends suffice to define the essential character of the government in a country where politics pursues the moral method, and in so far as the second end is really implied in the first, this government may be characterised in one word as protective.

These two methods in politics—one, the mechanical and coercive, and the other, the moral and protective—require to be fully discussed and understood, for the present phase of the world-politics demands of us the keenest scrutiny into the very fundamental political institutions on which we find history to have built collective life in the various countries. And for exercising such scrutiny, no better principle can be laid hold of and applied than what the distinction between the two methods we have indicated implies. The fundamental question is: How far the politics of a country ought to be mechanised? There is no doubt that organisation cannot but be the watchword when we have to consolidate the whole collective life of a people. But every human organisation is bound to prove a failure if the human element in it becomes crushed under the mechanical element. This is the sterling truth which Europe has been rather obstinately violating ever since the

mechanical age dawned over its life and thought. From the ancient Romans and the Greeks it inherited the centralising and the legislating spirit in politics to an over-exaggerated degree, and when its peoples struggled out of the almost unmitigated autocracy of the kings, they instinctively rushed forward to combine the newly acquired freedom with the old Roman and Greek spirit of state-centralisation. And the result was a deplorable surrender of the individuality in man, not now to the autocracy of kings but to the machine of a state. For man is a moral being, and the human will admits only of being disciplined but never of being mechanised; therefore it should never submit, even on trust, to any human power which seeks to supersede at every step its self-determinations. And it is the very essential function of a centralised state to seek to supersede the need of individual self-determinations by its own acts and initiatives. The people who live under such a state are taught to look upon such supersession as the demand of patriotism, and thus their individuality as man is sacrificed for the sake of mechanical efficiency and precision.

The moral method in politics on the other hand seeks to work out the same efficiency and precision not so much through the uniformity of state-coercion as through the uniformity in the self-determinations of the individual moral sense, or the sense of Dharma. This moral method and ideal in politics presupposes, of course, a long course of training in the people, and cannot, therefore, be made to supplant the mechanical method in a day. Over and above, it involves a special organisation of the religious or ethical authority in society, not, however, in the sense of some centralised theocratic institution, but in the sense of some uniformly accepted scheme of life in which religion is to exercise through its true acknowledged representatives a supreme *moral* authority over individual interests of life. In fact, in this ideal of



politics the individual sense of responsibility is never sought to be weakened or superseded by any form of external coercion, however freely acquiesced in. On the contrary, it is sought to be heightened and reinforced by a system of ethical education from the background, constituting the very basis of the whole collective life of the people. The duties of the individual unit towards the whole acquire, in this way, a religious imperativeness, and they constitute the Praja-dharma of the people. This strong sense of Praja-dharma naturally obviates the necessity of a good deal of coercion and legislation from a central government, and the state may very well confine itself mainly to its protective and punitive functions.

It is needless to specify that the principles set forth above go to make up the ideal of the ancient system of Indian politics. For it is only in India that what we have called the moral method in politics found its historical application, and the reason for this unique fact lies in the peculiar type of nationalism which Indian history pledged itself from its very start to evolve. And to account for this peculiarity both of the Indian nationalism and the Indian politics, we have to bear in mind the lofty Individualism of Indian philosophy and religion. The individual is verily the temple of the Highest,—**आत्मानं रश्मिं विद्धि शरीरं रूपमेव तु**—“Know the individual body to be but the chariot of the Charioteer, the One Atman in each body.” The individual man is therefore not to be superseded by any power which is not of the Atman, the Inner Self. So it is out of his sense of this Inner Self, out of his spiritual judgment, out of his spiritual self-determination, that he must be made to act in every sphere of life, the whole of which being thus spiritualised for him. Let him therefore, first of all, know his Swadharma, or the thoughts and actions that are due from him to the Atman dwelling within himself and dwelling outside in man

in all the different stations and collectivities of life. Let him have this education in his Swadharma first of all. Then leave him free to make his own contribution to the sum-total of thought and action which his nation embodies. First develop his individuality as firmly grounded in the spiritual sense of his duties in life, and then let this individuality work for the common good through all the round of life's occupations.

This intense Indian Individualism, therefore, is not at all an idea which in any way contrasts or antithesises itself with the collective idea in any of its forms. Evidently it includes and implies the collective idea. In the West, all forms of collectivism, all the relations of the individual with the whole in any of its forms, are based on an idea of contract, and this give-and-take idea necessarily involves duality of interest, always admitting of possible conflict. My interest is to realise my rights which are your duties and your interest is to realise your rights which are my duties. This conflict of interest is the grounding assumption on which the smooth carrying out of all mutual obligations proceeds, and individualism based on such a feeling of conflict is too narrow to compare with the lofty Individualism of Indian thought and life. For this Individualism is not based on any narrow, mercenary idea of contract, but on the ultimate unity of all life in all its aspects, both individual and collective. The individuality which India, therefore, seeks to develop in every unit of the nation is superior beyond comparison to the kind of individuality which any European nation seeks to develop in each of its units and which, curiously enough, the Westerners pride themselves upon as being a point of incomparable excellence such as the Indians would do well to emulate.

Naturally in politics also, India never adopted the narrow contract idea of individuality as the basis of her system of educating the masses. They were never taught to look up-



on the state as the centre of all those activities in life which provide their material needs, or as the source by connecting themselves with which they are to derive all their individuality in life. The state or the king was quite a secondary power in comparison with the power of Dharma which was to govern them in all their relations to their neighbours and to the whole land. So, excepting protective and punitive legislation and administration, the state had very little coercive function to perform so long as this power of Dharma was operative on the life of the people. And because the machine of the state was not supposed to be an instrument of such coercion, the people never trained themselves to strive to bring this instrument into their own possession or under their control. The state never governed them in the sense in which the state governs the Western peoples; so in order to enjoy the benefit of self-government, they had no need of aiming or seizing at the powers and functions of the state. Such powers and functions were mere side-issues in comparison with the important initiative left to them of administering all the intrinsic affairs of their life out of their own sense of Dharma.

The complaint, therefore, that is generally made to the effect that the Indian people are hopelessly deficient in political education is perfectly groundless, for the complaint really proceeds from a fundamental mistake in supposing that politics must be the same sort of commodity all the world over. England has been bringing over to India a new system of politics, and with it, therefore, a new standard of judging political competence. Now if anybody deems it to be a necessity that India should accept with open arms this new system of state-centred politics, well, he must agree to have the Indian people judged by the new Western standards of political competence. And if wise people sit in judgment over the issue and apply these Western standards, as high gubernatorial personages seem to be

doing—from the Rt. Hon. Mr. Montagu downwards even to Indian Metropolitans, there can be absolutely no doubt as to the verdict that will be given. And the same verdict of incompetence will have to be given throughout eternity; for a people who has been brought up and lived under one system of politics for untold centuries cannot be twisted, tortured and forced into another new system of politics fundamentally different from the former in the very conception of individuality and in the general outlook on life. Education of the mass of Indian people in Western politics, therefore, is bound to prove something like the impossible process of transforming one species of trees into another! But this is no reason at all why the Indian people cannot be made to develop real democratic institutions on the basis of their own ancient conception of politics and of the relation between Raja or the state and Praja or the people. For, as we have seen above, if real democracy implies the administration by the people themselves of the affairs in life in such a way as to make for the uniformity and compactness of a strongly organised nationality, the highly mechanised Western politics of the state-centred type is rather a wrong device which produces a democracy on trust instead of a democracy in reality, whereas the Indian system and ideal of politics, in which the people develop democratic institutions among themselves to keep up their education in their Dharmas or duties and to help to determine these duties under all circumstances, and therefore have very little to rely on the state for working out their common good and their common progress, surely denotes a far better scheme and device for organising and democratising the collective life of a country. In Western politics, the centralisation of all power and initiative in the state is an artificial process, and therefore the self-assertiveness of the people by which they compel the state-machine to work for their good is an artificial virtue. In



the Indian system, on the other hand, the people have hardly much necessity of cultivating this artificial virtue, for they do not delegate all power and initiative of working out their common good to the state. But though they have to be less self-assertive, they have to be far more self-determinative, that is, far more democratic in the real sense.

## CORRESPONDENCE :

### THE POLITICAL PROBLEM.

To the Editor, Prabuddha Bharata.

Dear Swamiji,

We read with some interest your article on the Indian Problem in the current issue of P. B. and read also your previous articles on the same subject. But I must confess that I—and there are very many like me, to my personal knowledge,—always have failed to grasp the practical side of the question. It always appeared to me that you indulge rather too much in theory and dreaming than the *modus operandi*, and as such, your writings have more of destructive than constructive value. (1)\* I shall explain myself presently. So far as the theory that the basis of our national life must be Religion and Spirituality is concerned, not even a devil of present-day politicians does contradict. (2) Although it must be said that your condemnation (3) of the Western type of communal life is hasty and premature. True that their national ideal towards which the cumulative life-force of the nation is directed, is material and imperialistic, but who knows that the present war will not be an eye-opener to them and turn their gaze to a higher purpose of life; and once thus an higher ideal is formed, the whole of the same communal life-force will be made to tend towards its achievement. And who can prognosticate that by the impact of that spiritualising communal power the spiritual destiny of the individual will not be more quickly realised than in the tardy process of our Swadharma? (4)

However, accepting that we should not change the mode of our national life for the realisation of our spiritual destiny, you have to accept also that there should be an harmonious organic development of the nation. (5) And exactly this is what is

termed in our Scriptures as Varnashrama Dharma, and you too have freely used the terms Swadharma, Prajadharma and Rajadharma in the aforesaid article.

Now, the resuscitation of the Swadharms means the revival of the four Varnas and four Ashramas, and these institutions should be maintained in view of the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha—not for Moksha alone, mind that (as all people can never have the one ideal of Moksha in life, so a legitimate freedom is given to them to take up the other three ideals and *Pravritti Dharma* is so formulated that these will be stepping-stones to the fourth. The Lord Himself says—*पार्थावित्तुः कामोऽस्मि*). So you see, neither you can ignore the legitimate aspiration (call it ambition if you please) of the ordinary ignorant folk whose number is legion, nor can you coerce them into Moksha Marga. (6) The development must be natural,—through *Pravritti Dharma* to the *Nivritti*. This is the scheme of the ancient Varnashrama Dharma. It ignores no legitimate aspiration of man, but takes him by the hand and leads him from the lower to higher and higher stages of life. Whereas your advocacy of the Swadharma seems to be shooting wide from the mark. (7) No doubt you urge to revive the Swadharma, the Prajadharma—and only the Prajadharma,—and leave the Rajadharma into the hands of the English, (8) and thus you want to square up the political struggle in India. But there are several egregious blunders in the conception. Let me show them categorically :

I. First and foremost is : that the Rajadharma can never be given up into the hands of those who have no faith in our conception of Dharma and Scriptures and the spiritual destiny of the nation (9). Such persons can never discharge their Rajadharma fully as an indigenous Raja can do. The reason is obvious and the practical demonstrations of it are too numerous to be quoted here. And it seems that when our ancient Lawgivers enjoined upon us that the Prajas, i. e., other three Varnas, should never vie with the Raja for his political supremacy, by Raja they always meant the indigenous Kshatriya kings whose life-ideal will be the same as that of the people. (10) Bhishma says to the same effect in Rajadharma Parva—"The Kshatriya is the prop of Dharma, on him rests the sacred duty of maintaining the Sanatana Dharma." But alas, can such a thing be asserted of your Huzurs? I wish you would come down one day and see what havoc the Padris are doing in Southern India. The harmony that you so glibly speak of from your airy height is impossible in practical work-a-day life, so long as the ideal of the ruler is different from that of the ruled. Nor is it possible to reinstate Dharma in the society so long as the

\* These figures indicate the points taken up in the reply which follows.



rulers do not properly sympathise and actively co-operate with the ruled. The baneful effect of such spiritual disharmony of ideals between the rulers and the ruled is manifest most markedly in our modern educational institutions. Hence for the proper maintenance of Dharma and augmentation of our spiritual life, the centre of Raja-dharma must shift. That is why our political leaders are crying for Swaraj or Home Rule under British connection. (11)

II. Secondly, (12) when the Swadharma or Varnashrama Dharma will be revived—which you urge so eloquently—Brahmanas of course will go to their teaching and preaching vocation, (no doubt there are many white Pandits of your Huzur class who are eager to seize the profession from our poor Brahmanas, and your pen never criticises that point of the Huzurs.)—The Vaishya will take to his industrial life although there are, you know full well, great difficulties on his way that are sure to hinder him from getting on very well. There is the Huzur merchant class with all the Parliamentary legislature at its back, to pounce upon him if he dares to go beyond a certain prescribed area. The high duties on indigenous piece-goods beyond a certain texture of fineness, on medicine etc., and the govt. patronisation of the Western firms, are all clear examples of the above statement. And let poor Sudras alone as hewers of wood and drawers of water,—their Swadharma to boot. But what would you do with the devil of the Kshatriyas?—There are Kshatriyas in this land both by birth and propensities. (13) What would you do with them? You have graciously handed over the ruling power to your Hazurs. Then? Would you advise them to commit suicide? For assuredly you can never ask them to take up another's Dharma. Does not the Lord Himself say: “स्वधर्मो निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥” Or you would ask them to be your Huzur's foot-soldiers and slipper-bearers, according to the days of chivalry, and be satisfied with the few crumbs that your Huzur is pleased to throw before them? Nay, Swami, do not be deluded yourself, and do not try to delude the Nation. The Leviathan is rising again, and for God's sake don't lull him to sleep again with your lullabies! (14) Swami Vivekananda never wanted the extinction of the Kshatriya Virya of the race in favour of another. Moreover remember always his glowing words, “all foreign governments are evil.” The statecraft must be constituted by the people and for the people, as in the scheme of our political leaders.

With love and Namaskaras

Yours truly,

A Devotee.

[The letter, published above, opens an important discussion, which we have been inviting all along for the last three years. So we heartily welcome it, and ask our readers to follow the discussion with active interest, with patient study and thought. It is a pity, of course, that this letter of “A Devotee” raises such crude points for discussion as would never have been raised by any one who studies all our articles on Indian nationalism and the Indian system of politics with patient attention, free from prepossessions and bias. But still, for the sake of this important discussion, we take up below all the main points raised, one by one, representing our position with regard to each and adding references to the back numbers of the P. B. for the benefit of our constant readers.]

1. The undue domination of the West over our thought-life in India has essentially been a domination through new theories and ideals. So it is in stronger theories and ideals that a radical remedy for such domination must lie. Our educated countrymen are so often found to make a mess of all practical questions and facts, simply because they are not strong in theory and ideal. Prabuddha Bharata humbly seeks first to impart this strength to the educated mind, and consequently deals very much, indeed, with the theories and principles of Indian nationalism, the theories and principles of the Indian system of politics. Thereby it may be misunderstood by hasty critics as indulging itself too much in dreaming, for such critics themselves have very little patience for systemizing their thought and ideals before rushing into large fields of practical work. Such impatience is temperamental and is apt to look upon new theories or ideals to be merely destructive when they tend to upset their blind, self-complacent, uncritical attitude in practical work.

2. Yes; “not even a devil of a present-day politician does contradict,” as our correspondent puts it, that our national life must be based on religion, but, please, show us one angel of a politician in the country who explains what this term ‘basis’ really means in this connection. For discussion of the term “Spiritual Basis,” vide P. B. July, 1914.

3. “The Western type of communal life” is condemnable in view only of the choice which we in India are called upon to make to-day. So our point has always been that this Western type may be good for the Westerners, who have been evolving their life under it, but it is bad for us, whose immemorial ideals have committed us irrevocably to another type of communal life.

4. We yield to none in our appreciation of the virtues of the Western communal life. But the present war has not yet made it clear how its many evils are going to be remedied by it for good, and



even supposing that the "impact" of some spiritualising factor comes into this communal life after the war, the process of transforming all political values of life into ultimate spiritual values is bound to be long and tardy. On the other hand, the process of broadening and re-vivifying our sense of Dharma so as to make it operative in the pursuit of our collective good in all its aspects, need not be an equally long and tardy process if only we recognise the fact of a newly revealed spiritual force that has already come into our midst to dynamise itself into that process, even partially. So the critic here betrays by his statements only a confused mind on such abstract issues.

5-6. What is meant by "a harmonious organic development of the nation"? The P. B. has been taking such an expression to mean "the progressive efficiency in and harmony amongst all the pursuits of life in its communal or collective aspect as implied by the term nation." This is how the idea may be expressed in terms of modern thought. But our critic prefers to declare in respect of the same expression, "this is what is termed in our scriptures as Varnashrama Dharma." But this Varnashrama is an old method of systematizing the pursuits of communal life. Centuries of history have served to make this method antiquated and all but obsolete, and we are only in a position to adhere at present only to the underlying principle and not to the old, decrepit form of this method. So "the resuscitation of Swadharma" of the people does not mean, as our critic assumes, "the revival of the four *varnas* and four *ashramas*." We have actually to modernise our social institutions, and time itself has already carried the process far enough to cut off any long retreat on our part. The days of knitting caste and occupation in happy wedlock have long passed by, and time may further be depended upon to demolish some of the old, impossible barriers of caste. We must now tend towards simplifying the distinctions as far as possible, conformably to social purity and eugenic advantages. But whatever be this line of social reconstruction, there is no question that in all our pursuits, individually as well as collectively, there must be room enough for all the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. And who whispered into the ears of our critic that the P. B. wants to force all men in India into the one path of Moksha? Such a wrong assumption on the part of our friend argues quite a superficial and desultory frame of mind brought to the study of our articles. As regards the place of the fourfold Purushartha in the scheme of the Indian nationalism, vide P. B. July, 1915, page 127.

7. Says our critic, "the development must be natural, through Pravritti Dharma to the Nivritti Dharma. This is the scheme of the ancient

Varnashrama Dharma. It ignores no legitimate aspiration of man, but takes him by the hand and leads him from the lower to higher and higher stages of life. Whereas your advocacy of the Swadharma seems to be shooting wide of the mark." Never did any criticism shoot wider of the mark! What the P. B. has been calling by the name of the Indian scheme of life, our critic chooses to call by the much less happy and appropriate name of the Varnashrama Dharma. Otherwise there is no ground of complaint, for the Indian scheme of life has time and again been explained in the P. B. to be broad enough for all the legitimate pursuits and aspirations of man, and religion being the governing end in this scheme, all the pursuits inevitably tend to lead man to his highest spiritual destiny. So how do the views of the P. B. in this matter shoot wide of the mark?

8. But what really has offended the susceptibilities of the "Devotee" and has almost upset his mind is the talk which the P. B. has, most unfortunately to his mind, indulged in of "leaving the Raja-Dharma into the hands of the English." Here also it is a total misunderstanding that lies at the root of all the critic's vehement protestation. For Raja-dharma is not "the rights of the state" in the sense of Western politics, but it is, as explained in the P. B., the duties of the state. And what are these duties of the state? "Protection and maintenance" (i. e. "to protect and maintain what the people themselves work out on their own initiative") "are the terms which define the Raja-dharma of the state in India and they should always be the watchwords of administrative policy in every branch of the government. There may be that progressive association of the people in every branch of administration which England is now promising to see to, but more important than that is the real voice of the representatives of the people in determining how the Raja-dharma of protection and maintenance is to be pursued by the state in every branch of administration. For without such effective voice the praja-dharma of the people cannot have the raja-dharma of the state harmonised to itself." (Pages 169-170, P. B. Sept., 1917). Taking into account the place which the P. B. thus allots to Raja-dharma in our scheme of politics, may we ask our critic what is the great crime which the P. B. has committed in thus "squaring up," as he says, "the political struggle in India"? Can you point out a single respectable political creed in India, from the Home Rule propaganda down to the most jelly-fish opinion about reforms, which seeks to remove the political sovereignty of England in India? The question is not whether this sovereignty should be exercised by England or not, but how this sovereignty is to be exercised conformably to the best interests of the people in India. The P. B. seeks to show, as



much as any other political creed now prevalent in the country, how this latter question may be best solved in accordance with the spirit of Indian nationalism. But our critic fancies in his mind, most unwarrantedly, a horrific state of things ensuing as the result of "leaving the Raja-dharma into the hands of the English," and comes forward to point his trembling finger to what he calls "egregious blunders in the conception" in an amusing vehemence of language! Let us now consider these alleged blunders.

9. Declares our critic,—the English "have no faith in our conception of Dharma and scriptures and the spiritual destiny of the nation." If this be true, the fault is mainly ours, for what have we ourselves done yet to prove the merits of this conception and the possibilities of our spiritual destiny? On the other hand, we have been foolishly neglecting the development of the people and their politics on these our national lines and have been all along seeking to figure as apish and servile imitators of the English system of collective life and politics. But the absence of faith complained of is bound to be remedied directly we start organising the people on the basis of our "conception of Dharma and scriptures and the spiritual destiny of the nation," with any amount of success. Faith in what is good in ourselves is bound to be induced in others if only we succeed in practically bringing out all these good points, not if we prefer what is good in others and good for others to what is good in ourselves and good for ourselves.

10. In the time of the ancient law-givers in India, the Kshatriya kings, of course, formed part and parcel of the society for which the laws or Dharma were given; and therefore, the problem of harmony between the Raja-dharma and Praja-dharma could be solved far more easily, and Raja-dharma could form a more or less natural alliance with Praja-dharma. And the difficulties of such an alliance may have been very much enhanced under present circumstances when England's sovereignty in India is a fact to be reckoned with. But such difficulties have to be faced in the solution of every large political problem in history which concerns a whole country and its special culture and civilisation. We admit these difficulties, but do not think they are insuperable, as our critic evidently seems to think. All our efforts and struggles in the political field should have their real significance and meaning in this fundamental object of removing and solving these difficulties on the way of making the British power in India allied to the spiritual scheme of our national life. And there are mutual obligations of political interest between England and India, which make it clear that there is always room

enough in India's relation with England for this alliance of the latter's sovereign power in India with the former's scheme and destiny of national life. The real difficulty for such an alliance lies not in any serious conflicting attitude of England, but rather in the fact that *the other party in the alliance has not yet appeared*. Our best energies should first be directed towards bringing forward this other party, the India standing self-organised to some degree on the basis of its own national scheme of life and its national mission in the world.

11. "For the proper maintenance of Dharma and augmentation of our spiritual life, the centre of Raja-dharma *must* shift. That is why our political leaders are crying for Swaraj or Home Rule." This is the real ground on which our critic stands in his much-diluted argument. In the first place, it may be easily seen by every thoughtful reader of the Prabuddha Bharata that this journal never deprecated political efforts and struggles for reform carried by any well-constituted and well-intentioned political party among the people in India, but what it has been deprecating is the political philosophy on which these efforts and struggles are evidently grounded. Though we do not identify ourselves with any political movement of the day, we have sincere respect for the self-sacrificing spirit of the political leaders whom our critic has referred to in the above quotation. But still we feel it to be our duty, as the great Swami Vivekananda felt it to be his when delivering his lectures from Colombo to Almora, to warn our countrymen, specially the political workers, against the fatal danger of Westernising the Indian life by importing Western ideals of politics to form the groundwork of nation-building in India. Very few of our educated countrymen have yet made a really scientific study of the fundamental differences that lie between the Western and the Indian methods and ideals of political life, and therefore much of their praise-worthy enthusiasm and effort in the political field is being misdirected, owing to their blind imitation of Western political conceptions and shibboleths. The very loud bid they are making for the Western system of state-centred politics, for instance, be it in the name of Home Rule, Colonial Self-government or the like, betrays their ignorance of the real nature and ideal of that self-government which alone is compatible with the type of national life their history has been all along seeking to evolve for their country. It is sad to think how our ample treatment and discussion of such important subjects are hastily and perfunctorily perused by readers of the type of our critic, "A Devotee." He here uses an expression—the shifting of the centre of Raja-dharma—which may mean many things, for by Raja-dharma he does not understand, as we have seen above, exactly what we mean to ex-



press, namely, the duties of protecting and maintaining the organisation of life or Dharma which the people work out for themselves. It is not Raja-dharma exercised under a system of state-centred politics. And it is this latter notion of Raja-dharma in the mind of our critic which confounds the real issues before him.

12. The last point in the criticism is hopelessly flimsy, for the critic here betrays his ignorance of the principles of Indian nationalism which the P. B. has all along been discussing and explaining for the last three years. Again and again it has been explained in its columns how the organic scheme of our national life comprehends all the ends and pursuits of human life and therefore there is ample provision within this scheme for the furtherance and realisation of such ends as the life of the four *varnas* used to embody, although the redistribution of the people now into the old hard and fast *varna* divisions has been rendered impossible by psychological and ethnic processes of amalgamation and intercourse for centuries and by the rise of non-Hindu communities. Our critic cites the present difficulties and obstacles on the way of pursuing such ends of life as the four *varnas* embodied. But very plainly all these difficulties and obstacles arise mainly because we have disorganised ourselves and look to the state to do everything for ourselves. If we be organised among ourselves, we can keep education in the country in our own hands and the question of providing as many Indian teachers with their vocation in life as are necessary for the purpose may be settled by ourselves. But if we rely on the British government to educate all of us, we have very little right to dispute their choice of teachers. Similarly, the difficulties of the merchant class cannot be removed so long as they make themselves helpless and exposed to exploitation by foreigners by their own fault of self-disorganisation. But directly they become organised among themselves and also form part of the whole people as organised on the basis of their nationalism, all these difficulties are bound to disappear. Every thoughtful man in India knows that all such difficulties in the field of trade, commerce and industry, are primarily due to the growing disorganisation in the people, and therefore, the most fundamental problem for us in every sphere of our life is the problem of organisation. This organisation, it is our belief, can only be brought about if our country's workers go back to the people with our own national system of life and politics instead of merely besieging the present government to confer on themselves governmental powers over the people. Let some of the leaders watch and try to safeguard our interests so far as they lie now within the machinery of the government, but let all our main energies be devoted to the organising work among the masses of the people.

13. As regards our critic's objection on behalf of the "Kshatriya Virya" of the race, we would refer him to pages 177, 178, P. B. of Sept. 1914, where he will find how the Kshatriya Virya is to be organised in the coming system of our national life we are called upon to organise to-day. So he himself "shoots quite wide of the mark," when he lectures us upon the impossibility of ignoring the Kshatriya aspect and element of our national life. The real mistake of our critic is that he has come forward to inveigh against our position without properly studying it, without seeing that it really implies an organic system of thought, a philosophy, which leaves not a single problem of life untackled or unsolved.

14. Lastly the critic advises us to see how the people of India are slowly awakening, how "the Leviathan is slowly rising," and therefore requests us not to lull it back into sleep again. Alas for the perversity of view which accuses the Prabuddha Bharata in this ridiculous strain! Here we leave the critic to enjoy the self-complacency of a superior vision of things of which he deems us to be deprived by our lack of enthusiasm for any glorious future for India. His concluding quotation from Swamiji: "All foreign governments are evil," does not cut any way, for in all our struggle against evils, in which most of life consists, we have not always to destroy them altogether, but more often to mend them to the best advantage by taking off their stings. Neither has even self-government in many a country proved to be anything but evil very often in history, say, even in modern times. But please see what Swamiji says when he makes a more definite statement about the government now established in our country. "Look at the firmly fixed throne of the British, and what is its foundation? It is in the fact that it does not lay violent hands on the *dharma*. And it was slight efforts in this direction on the part of the Pádris, which brought about the row of 1857. As long as the English understand this fully well and work up to it, so long 'their throne, power and state would remain immovable.' (तकत ताज अचल राजधानी ।)." (Translated from page 23 of Swamiji's Bengali Book, *The East and West*.) Swamiji's real attitude towards the British government was never of the type of our critic's. His idea was always to reform the country first from within so that political reformation in the Government may inevitably follow in the wake of the self-organising Dharma and manhood of the country.—Ed. P. B.]

N. B.—For want of space we have to reserve reviews and reports for the next month and we apologise to friends concerned for this unavoidable delay. Please read the Manager's important notice in this number.